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ABSTRACT

Designed to discriminate Negro dialect speech from standard English, the Rystrom Dialect Test seeks to overcome three problems encountered in research about Negro speech; determining what stable elements distinguish Negro dialect from standard English, constructing a test easily administered to a young child and capable of measuring the differences in dialect, and finding unbiased and simple methods of evaluating test results. The test consists of 24 pairs of sentences which the student hears and repeats twice, once with the features under study occurring in the sentence and once without the feature. Speakers on the test tapes are white--an Illinois female, a Georgia male, and a Georgia female. Results of the test administered to 120 Negro and 100 white children in Georgia indicate a significant mean difference. [This document is one of those reviewed in The Research Instruments Project (TRIP) monograph "Measures for Research and Evaluation in the English Language Arts" to be published by the Committee on Research of the National Council of Teachers of English in cooperation with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. A TRIP review which precedes the document lists its category (Standard English as a Second Language or Dialect), title, author, date, and age range (preschool, primary), and describes the instrument's purpose and physical characteristics.] (JM)

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CS 201364

Category: Standard English as a Second Language or Dialect

Title: "Rystrom Dialect Test"

Author: Richard C. Rystrom

Age Range: preschool, primary

Description of Instrument:

Purpose - To discriminate Negro dialect speech from standard English

Date of Construction - 1969

Physical Description - The Rystrom Dialect Test is designed to overcome three problems encountered by researchers working in the area of Negro speech: (1) the problem of determining what stable elements distinguish Negro dialect from standard English; (2) the problem of constructing a test which is easily administered to a young child and is capable of measuring the differences in dialect; and (3) the problem of finding unbiased and simple methods of evaluating test results. The author describes the development and limitations of four dialect test versions which established the procedures and content of the instrument reported here. An arbitrary, and admittedly somewhat inaccurate, decision was made to define Negro dialect as a series of deletion transformations applied to a standard English base, rather than as a discrete set of kernel sentences and transformational rules. The test consists of a series of taped sentences which are to be repeated. Twenty-four pairs of sentences were chosen in such a way that the student hears and repeats each sentence twice, once with the features under study occurring in the sentence, and a second time, without the feature. When possible, each feature was used following every phoneme in English. All sentence versions are meaningful. Speakers on the test tapes are white and include an Illinois female, a Georgia male, and a Georgia female. Test administration requires two tape recorders; one to be used as a playback device, and a second to record the student's responses. The twenty-four sentences ultimately comprising the test were found during a trial administration to 129 Negro and 100 Caucasian first-graders in Georgia to be correctly repeated more than eighty per cent of the time by white subjects and less than twenty per cent of the time by black subjects. The types of features represented in the items include: four sentences (#'s 4, 5, 6, 15) which test for the past tense morpheme, eight items (#'s 1, 2, 7, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17) test for the singular copula, five (#'s 3, 9, 12, 22, 24) probe modal will, one (#19) examines reduced consonantal clusters, and six (#'s 8, 14, 18, 20, 21, 23) distinguish the plural copula from the null form.

RYSTROM DIALECT TEST[1]

Directions: "I'm going to tell you some sentences. I want you to repeat each one after me, as I say it."

Example items:

1. We talk about cars.
2. They follow us.
3. The fish swim up the river.
4. The church burned.
5. We carry them to the store.
6. The children get all they want to eat.

Test items:

1.A. The light's burned out.
B. The light burned out.
2.A. The sky's clouded over.
B. The sky clouded over.
3.A. Some friends of Bob'll go with us.
B. Some friends of Bob go with us.
4.A. My friends played baseball.
B. My friends play baseball.
5.A. They followed us.
B. They follow us.
6.A. They always ordered a coke.
B. They always order a coke.
7.A. Our house's rented for fifty dollars.
B. Our house rented for fifty dollars.
8.A. The hairs on his neck're stiffened.
B. The hairs on his neck stiffened.
9.A. The children'll get all they want to eat.
B. The children get all they want to eat.
10.A. The book's ripped.
B. The book ripped.
11.A. His wife's parked in front of the gate.
B. His wife parked in front of the gate.
12.A. The people at church'll sing hymns.
B. The people at church sing hymns.
13.A. The boy's finished.
B. The boy finished.
14.A. The people of the church're prepared to fix the roof.
B. The people of the church prepared to fix the roof.
15.A. The hounds bayed at the moon.
B. The hounds bay at the moon.
16.A. The king's packed.
B. The king packed.
17.A. The girl's tired of the game.
B. The girl tired of the game.
18.A. His feet're tired from standing all day.
B. His feet tired from standing all day.
19.A. I don't need your cold.
B. I don't need your coal.
20.A. The boys under the bridge're finished swimming.
B. The boys under the bridge finished swimming.
21.A. The parks by the river're closed.
B. The parks by the river closed.
22.A. Only half'll want to visit a farm.
B. Only half want to visit a farm.
23.A. The ropes around the log're frayed.
B. The ropes around the log frayed.
24.A. The fish'll swim up the river.
B. The fish swim up the river.

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[1] Rystrom, R. C. Testing Negro-Standard English dialect differences. Reading Research Quarterly, 1969, 5, p. 507.

Validity, Reliability and Normative Data:

Face validity was demonstrated. The mean score differences between Negro and white subjects were highly significant on administrations to 22 Negro and 22 white rural Georgia second graders, 107 rural Georgia Negro first graders, seven Negro and seven white urban Georgia three-year-olds, and five urban Georgia white four-year-olds. Mean scores for the first sample were 6.1 for Negroes and 17.64 for whites. Reliability figures, also partitioned by age and geographic region, were computed by the split-half method. Correlations range from .95 for urban white three-year-olds, to .67 for rural white second-graders.

Ordering Information:

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Related Documents:

Rystrom, R. C. Testing Negro-Standard English dialect differences. Reading Research Quarterly, 1969, 4, 500-511.

TESTING NEGRO-STANDARD ENGLISH DIALECT DIFFERENCES

RICHARD C. RYSTROM

CS 201 364

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International
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Testing Negro-standard English dialect differences

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PRESENTS THE PROCEDURES used in developing a measure designed to reliably discriminate Negro dialect speech from standard English. Four trial tests were reported which were administered to children in Oakland, California. The final measure, the Rystrom Dialect Test, was administered to 120 Negro and 100 white children in Georgia. Results indicated a significant mean score difference between Negro and white subjects on the final measure. Suggestions were offered for further research into dialect differences.

Analyse des différences entre les dialectes noir et l'anglais-américain standard

PRESENTE LES PROCEDES employés dans la recherche d'un moyen de mesure destiné à distinguer avec sûreté le dialecte noir de l'anglais-américain standard. Suit un rapport de quatre tests d'essai administrés à des enfants d'Oakland en Californie. Le test proprement dit "Rystrom Dialect Test" est administré en Georgie à 120 enfants noirs et 100 enfants blancs. Les résultats indiquent une différence significative entre les scores moyens des noirs et des blancs. Suivent des suggestions de recherches supplémentaires dans le domaine des différences dialectales.

Prueba sobre las diferencias entre el inglés standard y el dialecto de los negros

PRESENTA LOS PROCEDIMIENTOS utilizados en el desarrollo de una medida diseñada para determinar con exactitud la diferencia entre el dialecto de los negros y el inglés corriente. Se reportan cuatro pruebas efectuadas con niños en Oakland, California. La medida final, la Prueba de Dialecto Rystrom, se llevó a cabo con unos 120 niños negros y 100 niños blancos en el Estado de Georgia. Los resultados demostraron una diferencia significativa entre las notas de los niños negros y de los blancos en la prueba final. Se ofrecieron sugerencias para que se efectúen investigaciones adicionales sobre las diferencias en dialectos.

This research was performed with the support of the Research and Development Center in Educational Stimulation at the University of Georgia.

Interest in language study during the last fifteen years has resulted in an increasing number of linguists who are attempting to describe language-related phenomena and a geometric increase in the number of teachers who seek applications of linguistic principles to classroom problems. The assumptions of phrase structure grammars were widely discussed until the concept of transformational grammars altered the foundations upon which language study was to be based; interest in transformational grammars has been replaced by interest in dialects, particularly the dialect of the Negro child and the role of this dialect in the learning process.

Until recently, a teacher looking for information about Negro dialect could expect little help from linguists. Although many questions about this dialect remain unanswered, some procedures for describing it and some accurate statements about it can now be made. Reed (1966) has carefully delineated various attitudes toward language usage, suggesting that while prescriptive statements may have some relevance for social situations, they add little information to what is known about language. Shuy's (1967) book defines the terminology and methods used by the dialectologist in acquiring accurate information. Although both works provide important foundation information, neither of them is directly applicable to the problems of the researcher or teacher. The research of Labov (1966), which examined some of the ways in which the Negro dialect differs from standard English, provides reliable information and describes a number of new techniques for defining Negro speech, but it is somewhat technical for the non-linguist.

In addition to the linguist's position that any dialect is a viable method of communicating for the speech community which uses that dialect, two other attitudes toward Negro dialect can be defined. One of these, that a Negro dialect is an inferior form of speech which should be changed, seldom occurs in print. Proponents of this position argue that a Negro child is disadvantaged socially, culturally, and economically because of his dialect. The other attitude toward the Negro dialect is perhaps best exemplified by Bereiter and Engelmann (1966) who take the position that Negro speech interferes with the cognitive development of a Negro student because of linguistic deficiencies within the dialect. That is, they assert that certain basic concepts and skills depend upon the acquisition of a standard English dialect. Most statements about Negro speech can be categorized in one of these ways.

Despite the obvious linguistic bias of this paper, its purpose is not to confirm or refute any one of these positions. It is intended to help solve three problems encountered by researchers working in the area of Negro speech: *1*] the problem of determining what stable elements distinguish Negro dialect from standard English, 2] the problem of constructing a test easily administered to a young child which is capable of measuring the differences in dialect, and 3] the problem of finding unbiased and simple methods of evaluating test results. The difficulties in overcoming these problems stem, in part, from the amount of misinformation written about Negro dialect, which far exceeds that which is accurate. As a consequence, the researcher who wishes to examine dialect and elementary reading achievement is both unguided and misinformed. The present study describes the development of a test which differentiates Negro dialect from standard English.

Development of the test

The first step in developing the test reported later was an informal analysis of small samples of Negro speech, collected on tape during informal interviews. Typical examples of Negro speech noted in these tapes were: *1*] apparent failure to distinguish between *dry* and *drive;* 2] *one* pronounced with no conspicuous *-n* sound at the end of the word; 3] no recognizable distinction between *pie* and *pipe,* etc. The first dialect test, derived from these observations, focused on deleted sounds at the end of words and a simple comprehension test, intended to measure the ability of students to follow directions which were not spoken in their dialect. The test was administered to about thirty Oakland, California first graders. For each pair of words spoken by the examiner, the child was supposed to mark on his answer sheet either *S-S* if the pair was the same or *D-s* if the pair was different. In the comprehension section of the test, colored boxes of various sizes and shapes were described by accompanying statements: *The red box is longer than the blue box. The green box is on top of the white box, etc.* Each student was to respond by marking *T* for the true statements and *F* for the false ones. This test was deficient in several ways: first, the mean difference scores for Negro and white subjects were not statistically significant; second, the skills required to complete this test were too complicated for any first grader; third, the test items covered both crucial and relatively trivial distinctions between

Negro and non-Negro speech. A few items from this test were salvaged for the revised version.

The second dialect test, administered to another first-grade class at the same school, was composed of a series of randomly presented pictures of phonologically contrastive items, such as: *tie - tire; ball - bald; pie - pipe; 10 - tent;* etc. This was an individual test, requiring each child to look at the picture on each page and name the item he saw there. In order to increase the probability that the student would say the right word, a descriptive sentence accompanied each picture. For the answers presented above, the following questions were asked:

1] This man is wearing a neck_____.
2] This car has a _____.
3] That is a base_____.
4] This man doesn't have any hair; he is _____.
5] The child in the picture is eating a piece of _____.
6] A man is smoking his _____.
7] That is the number _____.
8] People who go camping sleep in a _____.

It was impossible to control the answers to these questions. A frequent response to (2) was *wheel;* (4) stimulated one child to respond: *We call him soup-bowl;* (5) fairly consistently produced *cake;* (8) apparently had no meaning for them since they answered that they slept in hotels. The problem was further complicated by the fact that many children did not know the letters of the alphabet. Another problem was that the missing words in the cue sentences were all in the final position, which doubtless affected the way they were pronounced. Finally, it was noted that a Negro child often produces a distinction between the words like *ball - bald* when his response requires a one-word answer, but does not make this distinction when using the same words in connected speech.

At that point, it became clear that "dialect by checklist" (McDavid, n.d.) was a totally useless method for either teaching or research purposes. It is true that most of the features (the term *feature* refers to any sound or cluster of sounds which can be used to make a distinction in meaning) so described occur in the Negro dialect. Many of them also occur in the speech of whites. Also, the features cited do not consistently appear in Negro dialects. A checklist fails to account for the frequency and importance of these features and their distribution within the dialect. It does not specify the contexts in which a particular feature is consistently deleted.

Two other events coincided with the discovery that distribution is an important element in distinguishing Negro speech from standard English speech. One was the decision to define the Negro dialect as a series of deletion transformations applied to a standard English base. If standard English speech is treated as a series of kernal sentences, some consistent changes (transformations) can be applied to these sentences in order to produce speech patterns similar to those used by most Negro speakers. For example, the standard English sentence *The boys will go,* when transformed, becomes *The boys go,* a close approximation of Negro speech. The decision to use standard English speech as the base and Negro speech as a transformed version of this base was both arbitrary and probably somewhat inaccurate. It seems more likely that there are, historically, two sets of kernal sentences and two sets of transformational rules which have converged to form the current Negro dialect. One set of kernal sentences and transformational rules produces standard English. The other set is derived from the original language or languages which were spoken by the Negro peoples brought to the United States. It would be more accurate, then, to treat Negro speech as the resultant product of two converging languages. However, for the project reported here, it was expedient to use the assumption that Negro dialect is a series of deletion transformations of standard English. In any case, a systematic description of a dialect is more accurate than the checklist method.

The second event was the discovery of the work done by William Labov (1966) with New York City Negro children. Using techniques which are available only to the trained dialectologist, Labov was able to devise a variety of interesting new techniques. Five types of features which he identified and which were of particular value in the present study are summarized below:

modal	*will*	(The rat*'ll* be on the table.)
singular copula	*is*	(The rat*'s* on the table.)
plural copula	*are*	(The rats*'re* on the table.)
past tense	*-ed*	(The rat jump*ed* off the table.)
terminal clusters	*-ft*	(The rat le*ft*.)

The third dialect test consisted of a series of sentences recorded on tape which the subjects, also first graders in Oakland, California, were to repeat. Each feature described above was included within these sentences. When each child had been tested, every sound which each subject made in response to the cues heard on tape was

transcribed. Below is an example of one of the sentences used in this test, and the transcribed version as pronounced on the recording.

His hand feels cold.
/hiz hænd fiylz kow d/

When each transcription was completed, the subject's output was then compared with the transcribed speech of the recording. Incorrect responses were placed in one of three categories: a deletion (*The boy go*); a distortion (*He axed a question*); or an addition (*My hands*[*es*] *are hot*). The number of errors made, subtracted from the total number of phonemes on the tape, yielded the dialect test score. Although this test was reliable ($r = 0.71$), there were two serious problems: *1*] Scoring the test was extremely difficult; several hours of listening time were required to transcribe each set of responses. 2] The examiner who scored the test also knew the students in the experiment. Thus, there may have been bias in transcribing the responses. The same person had to do both jobs in this version because few researchers are able to transcribe speech.

For the fourth version of the dialect test, pairs of sentences were chosen in such a way that the subject would hear and repeat each sentence twice, once with the feature occurring in the sentence and a second time, without the feature:

The colors in the room're faded.
The colors in the room faded.

(The sentences were written in their contracted form to illustrate the pronunciation used on the tape recordings; in no case was a sentence used like *The colors in the room are faded.*) When possible, each feature was used following every phoneme in English. That is, modal *will* was attached to voiced and voiceless bilabial stops /b/p/, a voiced bilabial nasal /m/, voiced and voiceless labiodental fricatives /v/f/, etc. The sentences were chosen in such a way that either version would be meaningful. The 104 pairs of sentences chosen were then randomly divided into four groups of 26 pairs. Each group became a test with 52 items: 26 with a particular feature and the same 26 sentences without the feature. These 52 items were then randomly ordered for each test. Next, four people were selected and randomly assigned to record the cue sentences for each test. The recorders were white: the *Form A* recorder was an Illinois female; the *Form B*, a Georgia male; *Form C*, a California male; and *Form D*,

a Georgia female. The different dialects were used in order to determine if the dialect of the speaker who gives the cue sentences influences the responses. These tests were then administered to approximately 120 Negro children and 100 Caucasian children in Georgia. Each examiner used two tape recorders. The first one acted as a playback device only, which the examiner and the subject listened to, using earphones. The second tape recorder was used to record the subject's responses only. In scoring the test, the examiner and his assistant had to choose between two pairs of sentences for each response. For example, responses 10 and 47 on *Form D* were: *The sky's clouded over; The sky clouded over.* On the scoring sheet, both of these sentences are listed under number 19 and under number 47. Each listener had to mark the sentence he heard the subject produce. If there was no response, or if the response was too garbled to allow a decision, then no mark was made on the scoring sheet. After each subject's responses had been marked, the examiner and his helper compared their results to see if they agreed; they had to determine if each of them marked each response in the same way. If not, they returned to the recording and listened to it until some agreement was made. (In about five per cent of the cases they agreed not to agree.)

By this time, a simple and workable procedure for testing dialect had been established. The next step was to conduct an item analysis of each form of the test, select those sentences which best discriminated between dialects, and use them and the procedures just described to collect test data. The final version of the dialect test is illustrated in Figure 1. The six items chosen as examples were produced correctly by nearly all subjects and were used to familiarize the subject with repeating cue sentences. Next, it was found that 24 sentences were correctly repeated more than eighty per cent of the time by white subjects and less than twenty per cent of the time by Negro subjects. These 24 sentences were selected for the test. Finally, it was also discovered that, using the same level of performance, three sentences were correctly repeated by Negro students but not by white speakers. These sentences were not included.

Rystrom Dialect Test

Five sentences (10, 12, 16, 19, 21) came from the form recorded by the Georgia male, eight (1, 2, 5, 13, 15, 17, 23, 24) from the Georgia female's tape, eleven (3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 18, 20, 22) from the reading by the Illinois female, and none from the tape made

DIRECTIONS:

"I'm going to tell you some sentences. I want you to repeat each one *after* me, as I say it."

Example items:

1. We talk about cars.
2. They follow us.
3. The fish swim up the river.
4. The church burned.
5. We carry them to the store.
6. The children get all they want to eat.

Test items:

1. A. The light's burned out.
   B. The light burned out.
2. A. The sky's clouded over.
   B. The sky clouded over.
3. A. Some friends of Bob'll go with us.
   B. Some friends of Bob go with us.
4. A. My friends played baseball.
   B. My friends play baseball.
5. A. They followed us.
   B. They follow us.
6. A. They always ordered a coke.
   B. They always order a coke.
7. A. Our house's rented for fifty dollars.
   B. Our house rented for fifty dollars.
8. A. The hairs on his neck're stiffened.
   B. The hairs on his neck stiffened.
9. A. The children'll get all they want to eat.
   B. The children get all they want to eat.
10. A. The book's ripped.
    B. The book ripped.
11. A. His wife's parked in front of the gate.
    B. His wife parked in front of the gate.
12. A. The people at church'll sing hymns.
    B. The people at church sing hymns.
13. A. The boy's finished.
    B. The boy finished.
14. A. The people of the church're prepared to fix the roof.
    B. The people of the church prepared to fix the roof.
15. A. The hounds bayed at the moon.
    B. The hounds bay at the moon.
16. A. The king's packed.
    B. The king packed.
17. A. The girl's tired of the game.
    B. The girl tired of the game.
18. A. His feet're tired from standing all day.
    B. His feet tired from standing all day.
19. A. I don't need your cold.
    B. I don't need your coal.
20. A. The boys under the bridge're finished swimming.
    B. The boys under the bridge finished swimming.
21. A. The parks by the river're closed.
    B. The parks by the river closed.
22. A. Only half'll want to visit a farm.
    B. Only half want to visit a farm.
23. A. The ropes around the log're frayed.
    B. The ropes around the log frayed.
24. A. The fish'll swim up the river.
    B. The fish swim up the river.

FIG. 1. Rystrom Dialect Test

by the California male. A research assistant noted that the enunciation of the California reader was exceedingly clear, which may account for the surprisingly high performance of the group using the tape made by him. Looking at the type of features represented in the items, four sentences (4, 5, 6, 15) test for the past tense morpheme, eight (1, 2, 7, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17) test for the singular copula, five (3, 9, 12, 22, 24) probe modal *will*, one (19) examines reduced

consonantal clusters, and six (8, 14, 18, 20, 21, 23) distinguish the plural copula from the null form. All of the sentences, with two exceptions, are stated in the inflected form. Responses (12) and (22), however, produced significant differences between Negro and white speakers when stated in the null form. Both sentences probe modal *will*. No explanation of this reversal is proposed here.

Test data

Face validity has been demonstrated. The mean score differences between Negro and white subjects, illustrated in Table 1, are

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, and number of subjects for the Rystrom Dialect Test

	Negro	*White*
Rural Georgia second graders		
$\bar{X}$	6.1	17.64*
s	3.7	3.8
n	22	22
Rural Georgia Negro first graders		
$\bar{X}$	6.8	
s	3.8	
n	107	
Urban Georgia three-year-olds		
$\bar{X}$	7.7	8.1
s	5.0	7.2
n	7	7
Urban Georgia white four-year-olds		
$\bar{X}$		19.9
s		3.8
n		5

*Mean differences between Negro and White subjects significant beyond the .001 level.

very significant. In addition, it is common to find the highest score made by Negro subjects and the lowest score made by white subjects within a point or two of one another. Table 1 provides baseline data about the test for children at different age levels and in different geographic settings. Reliability figures, also partitioned by age and geographic region, were computed by the split-half method; they are reported in Table 2.

Table 2 Odd-even correlation figures for the Rystrom Dialect Test

	Negro	*White*
Rural Georgia second graders	.85	.67
Rural Georgia Negro first graders	.70	
Urban Georgia three-year-olds	.88	.95
Urban Georgia white four-year-olds		.78

Conclusions and recommendations

That dialect influences a subject's responses seems likely. The data reported here appears to suggest that the dialect test works best when the cue dialect is the same as the dialect spoken by the subjects. That is, the Georgia dialect works best in Georgia, but the Wisconsin dialect would probably work best in Wisconsin. This conclusion, although not anticipated, seems reasonable. Negro children are unaware of differences between their dialect and the white dialect for that region. That is, they believe that their dialect is the same as the dialect they hear about them on television, in town, at the grocers, etc. But when they are given cues in a different regional dialect, a dialect they recognize as different, their attention is drawn to the differences, they listen more closely, and produce features which they would not otherwise have heard. A similar process also occurs between white speakers. In California, *wash* is pronounced both (wash) and (warsh). Two natives of that state might talk to one another for a lifetime without realizing that the other person has a different pronunciation for this particular word. But if either of them were asked to produce the speech of an Easterner using the unfamiliar form, the subject would identify it and he would think the alternate pronunciation an Easternism.

A second problem may be differences in structure between geographic regions. The items in this dialect test work well in Georgia, but that does not necessarily mean they will in other parts of the United States. Variations in sentence structure from region to region may have some influence on the results. It may be necessary to replace some items in this dialect test with other items which are more effective in distinguishing Negro speech from white speech. This can only

be discovered by giving the dialect test to a sample group and conducting an item analysis. If an item fails to distinguish between the two groups with at least eighty per cent accuracy, that item should be discarded or replaced by an item which will make a dialect distinction at that level. However, differences in syntax from one dialect to another are amazingly few, particularly within Negro speech.

Third, it was noted that the item analysis of the fourth version revealed three pairs which were consistently produced correctly by Negro subjects, but not by white subjects. These items (the asterisk [*] marks the form which was recorded on tape and to which each subject responded) are:

A. 1. The girls dressed themselves in new clothes.
   *2. The girls dress themselves in new clothes.
B. 1. Don't get cold.
   *2. Don't get coal.
C. *1. The sky's clouded over.
   2. The sky clouded over.

Most Negro speakers produce either sentence in example (B) as written in (2.); the *-d* in (1.) is not articulated. However, that does not explain why white children failed to respond correctly to this item. A test using items of this sort, chosen so a Negro child correctly repeats items which a white child does not, could be constructed using additional items to augment these three sentences. In dialect training programs, for example, it might be desirable to construct and use such a test, followed by a language training program which is built upon the features which the Negro child identifies easily. But in either case, such a decision would be determined by the purpose for which the test was designed .

Finally, because of the difficulties involved in getting responses from some children, two additional techniques, not built into the test, were found to be useful. First, it was often necessary during the example items to encourage a subject to respond by saying to him, *You say it, you say "We talk about cars," etc.* The second technique, which worked even more successfully, was discovered in the process of seeking a method of reducing the anxiety some children had about wearing earphones and talking into a microphone. Although many children found this experience fascinating, a few appeared to be terrified. Each child was required to wait for his turn a few feet from the recording area, where he could see the subject being recorded. When this procedure was followed, each child came into

the testing area ready to put on the earphones and repeat without any directions in addition to the single sentence on the tape. Further, there was no longer any apparent anxiety. What had appeared as slightly threatening then became fun. The possibility that this compromised the results seems unlikely. No child, except the one being tested, could hear the cue sentences; few children could memorize 24 sentences instantly.

The reasons for testing dialect as well as attitudes about the Negro dialect and disadvantaged children, have not been considered in this discussion. That is not to suggest that such attitudes are unimportant. It is hoped that research into the differences between Negro speech and white speech will seek to find ways in which to broaden what a child knows. If it is demonstrated that the Negro child is hindered by his dialect in acquiring some skills, such as reading, then the schools have an obligation to teach an *additional* dialect to him. If this dialect interferes with his identity and he decides not to learn another dialect, that is his right. The role of the school in this case is to expand what a child can do, not to prescribe what he must do. The tasks of the researcher is to describe dialects, measure them, determine if additional dialects should be taught, and provide the tools for teaching them. This dialect test is only one step in that process.

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